## Amendments to the Claims

Please amend Claims 8 and 15. Please cancel Claims 1-7, 9-14 and 18-25. The Claim Listing below will replace all prior versions of the claims in the application:

## Claim Listing

1-7.    Cancelled.

8.    (Currently Amended) ~~The method of~~ A method of updating meta-data associated with a component, wherein the meta-data includes a plurality of meta-data elements, the method comprising:

verifying signatures associated with the component meta-data;

accepting a first meta-data supplement comprising a plurality of meta-data elements;

verifying signatures associated with the first meta-data supplement;

authenticating the first meta-data supplement; and

updating the meta-data elements associated with the component with values of the plurality of meta-data elements associated with the first meta-data supplement

accepting a second meta-data supplement comprising a second plurality of meta-data elements;

verifying signatures associated with the second meta-data supplement;

authenticating the second meta-data supplement;

sorting the first and second meta-data supplements to provide a sorted plurality of meta-data supplements, each meta-data supplement including a time stamp and sorting the first and second meta-data supplements comprising sorting the meta-data supplements according to the time stamps;

updating the meta-data associated with the component with values of corresponding meta-data elements from the sorted meta-data supplements; and

verifying compatibility between ~~a~~ the meta-data associated with a component and a meta-data supplement by determining that like-named meta-data elements associated

with the component and the meta-data supplement have the compatible types and compatible mutability attributes.

9-14. Cancelled.

15.    (Currently Amended) ~~The method of claim 14~~ A method for use with digital components, the method comprising:

accepting a digital component, the digital component comprising content and component meta-data;

accepting a first meta-data supplement, the first meta-data supplement comprising first target meta-data and first supplement meta-data;

updating the component meta-data with the first target meta-data

determining whether the component meta-data is mutable; and

determining whether the target meta-data is compatible with the component meta-data, wherein the component meta-data and target meta-data each comprise a plurality of meta-data elements having an associated name, type, value, and mutability attribute, and ~~where in~~ wherein determining whether the target meta-data is compatible with the component meta-data comprises:

selecting a first meta-data element from the target meta-data;

determining whether the component meta-data includes a like-named meta-data element;

determining whether the first meta-data element and the like-named meta-data element have compatible mutability attributes; and

determining whether the first meta-data element and the like-named meta-data element have compatible types.

16. (Original) The method of claim 15 wherein the component meta-data includes a first meta-data signature and the target meta-data includes a second meta-data signature, the method further comprising:

verifying the first and second meta-data signatures; and

updating the component meta-data with the first target meta-data only if the meta-data signatures are successfully verified and the first and second meta-data signatures are from the same signer.

17. (Original) The method of claim 16 wherein the first and second meta-data signatures comprise digital signatures using public key cryptography.

18-25. Cancelled.